

Appl. No. 10/713,780
Amtd. dated February 15, 2005
Reply to Office action of November 16, 2004

REMARKS

The examiner objected to claims 1-3, 7-9 and 15 based on various informalities. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as amended address the examiner's concerns.

The examiner has rejected claims 1-16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by the Applicants' admitted prior art. The examiner has rejected claims 1, 4-7, 10-14 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,628,578 (McClanahan et al.). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Independent claim 1 recites a shaft coupling element including a safety notch extending through its partial cylindrical portion to define a radial opening from the shaft receiving slot through the cylindrical portion. Independent claim 7 recites a shaft coupling element including a safety notch extending through its first body portion to define a radial opening from the shaft receiving slot through the first body portion. The word "through" is defined in Merriam-Webster's dictionary as "extending from one surface to another".

The examiner cites the counter bore element 19 in Figs. 1 and 2 of applicants' present application as showing a notch extending through the cylindrical portion or first body portion to define the opening from the shaft receiving slot. However, as evident from Figs. 1 and 2, the counter bore 19 does not define an opening extending from one surface to the other surface of the yoke 18. The examiner also cites the extending protrusions 70 of McClanahan et al. as teaching the recited notch defining an opening from the shaft receiving slot. However, the protrusions 70 do not define any opening from the shaft receiving slot, but instead extend in to the shaft receiving slot. It is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references, alone or in any reasonable combination, teach or suggest the claimed shaft coupling element.

Independent claim 13 recites a method of forming a shaft coupling element including the steps of providing a blank with a first portion having a rear edge and providing a notch through the first portion with the notch extending from the rear edge. The blank is about its axis such that a shaft receiving slot is defined by the first portion with the notch defining a radial opening from the shaft receiving slot through the first portion. The examiner again relies on the Applicants' admitted prior art and McClanahan as teaching this method. However, as explained above, neither the Applicants' admitted prior art nor McClanahan teaches or suggests providing a notch through the blank first portion to define a radial opening from the shaft receiving slot through the first portion.

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It is respectfully submitted that pending claims 1-16 are in condition for allowance.
Early reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

If the examiner believes an interview, either telephonic or in person, will advance the prosecution of this matter, it is respectfully requested that the examiner get in contact with the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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